



Bearded Wycombe defender Steve Hardwick gets in a typical back header to trouble the Enfield defence during Saturday's goalless draw.

Paddling their way to defeat!

WYCOMBE'S hopes of finishing in the top four received a drenching in the puddles of Sandy Lane on Monday night when the side were beaten 2-0 by a Tooting side that seized its chances, writes MICHAEL KNOX.

In some of the worst conditions I have ever seen for a football match — there were a series of huge puddles all over the ground. Blues created enough chances to have sewn up the match in the first half but it was two second half opportunist goals in the second that saw Tooting to victory.

Conditions were farcical at times with a perfectly good pass being stopped in puddles and the game became a matter of chances — and chances.

Both sides created numerous openings in the first half but the best chances fell to Wycombe. Dylan Evans blasted over from eight yards, Stewart Atkins struck a post from a narrow angle after rounding the goalkeeper, Steve Hardwick saw a header cleared off the line and Terry Scott forced a good save from goalkeeper John Dunn.

At the other end the dangerous Desmond Dennis and Alan Ives fired wide with the goal at their mercy. Somehow the teams came in at half time with no score on the board.

Penalty miss

The deadlock was broken by an excellent goal by Tooting's new signing from Wimbledon, Fran Cowley in the 54th minute. Cowley gave himself room by 'turning' Steve Hardwick on the left edge of the area before sending over what appeared to be a harmless cross.

Tooting and Mitcham 2, Wycombe Wanderers 0

But John Maskell seemed to lose the ball in the lights and the ball curled inside the far post for an excellent goal.

Wycombe had their chances to equalise before Tooting clinched the result with a spectacular goal by Bob Pittaway seven minutes from the end. His shot from all of 20 yards soared into the top right hand corner of the net, beating Maskell's vain dive.

Three minutes later Blues had a chance to get back into the game, when they were awarded a

penalty after Mick Holifield's cross into the area had been handled but Howard Kennedy's fierce spot-kick slammed against the underside of the bar and was eventually cleared.

Andy Williams experimented by switching over his full-backs Bobby Davies and Paul Birdseye to opposite flanks — a move that was not an overwhelming success. Williams explained that he made the change, "just to see how things went."

In any case Davies had come off before the end with a pulled

thigh muscle and so it was substitute Alan Phillips who finished the game at right back.

It was just one of those nights!

TOOTING: J. Dunn, K. Highland, S. Grubb, R. Pittaway, R. Green, J. Keefe, D. Dennis, D. Casey, D. Juneman, F. Cowley, A. Ives. Sub. M. Cook (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, R. Davies (sub: A. Phillips 76 mins), K. Mead, S. Hardwick, D. Evans, S. Atkins, M. Holifield, L. Reed, H. Kennedy, T. Scott.

Referee: E. Day.

Half-time: 0-0. **Scorers:** Tooting-Cowley (54 mins), Pittaway (83).